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Report of the Secretary-General on the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions 2048 (2012) and 2103 (2013), and covers major political, security, human rights, humanitarian and socioeconomic developments in Guinea-Bissau since my report of 14 February 2014 (S/2014/105).

II. Restoration of and respect for constitutional order

A. Political situation

1. Overview of the political situation in the country

2. The reporting period was marked by significant progress in efforts to return the country to constitutional order, in particular through the holding of legislative and presidential elections on 13 April.

3. Following the delayed conclusion of the voter registration process on 10 February, the Transitional President, Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo, held consultations with political parties and other national stakeholders to determine a new date for the elections, originally scheduled for 16 March. On 21 February, the Transitional President issued a presidential decree announcing that the general elections would take place on 13 April. On 6 March, the National Assembly held an extraordinary session to ratify the new electoral timelines proposed by the Transitional President.

4. On 3 March, the Transitional President announced publicly that he would not contest the presidential election. The announcement put an end to controversy over his possible candidacy, which had been prohibited under the transitional political pact of May 2012.

5. During the period under review, internal divisions over leadership persisted within the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde (PAIGC). On 21 February, a group of nine supporters of Braima Camará, a leading candidate for the PAIGC leadership, lodged a complaint with the Regional Court of Bissau

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regarding the process utilized during the party's national congress to select members of the Central Committee, the Political Bureau and the legal department. On 24 February, those supporters accused the new PAIGC leader, Domingos Simões Pereira, and the chair of the national congress of nepotism and bias against other supporters of Mr. Camará. They argued that, although they were not contesting Mr. Simões Pereira's victory, they had been forced to take legal action because of his unwillingness to promote dialogue. On 4 March, the Regional Court of Bissau rejected the complaint on the grounds that the plaintiffs had failed to utilize the party's dispute resolution mechanisms.

6. On 3 March, the PAIGC Central Committee elected José Mário Vaz, former Minister of Finance in the deposed government and former Mayor of Bissau, as its presidential candidate. Mr. Vaz was elected from among eight other candidates, including former Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior. The Central Committee also approved the final list of PAIGC candidates in the legislative election. On 5 March, PAIGC submitted to the Supreme Court its lists of candidates for the presidential and legislative elections. The next day, the Prosecutor General petitioned the Supreme Court to disqualify Mr. Vaz as the PAIGC candidate, on the grounds that a criminal investigation had been conducted into corrupt activities allegedly committed by Mr. Vaz in February 2013. On 12 March, the Supreme Court rejected the request of the Prosecutor General on the basis that Mr. Vaz had not been convicted of any crime. The Supreme Court concluded that Mr. Vaz was entitled to his full political rights, stating that there were no legal impediments to him running in the elections. On 13 March, PAIGC filed a request in the Bissau Court of Appeals to lift the travel restrictions imposed on Mr. Vaz by the Prosecutor General in February 2013.

7. On 18 March, the Supreme Court released a list of 15 eligible political parties that would participate in the legislative election and 13 eligible presidential candidates, five of whom were independent candidates. Eight presidential candidates, including one woman, were not endorsed owing to their failure to meet some administrative requirements outlined in the electoral law.

8. On 20 March, 12 presidential candidates, including Abel Incada of the Social Renewal Party (PRS), Mr. Vaz (PAIGC), Nuno Gomes Nabiam (independent) and Paulo Gomes (independent), signed an electoral code of conduct that had been advocated by civil society organizations, religious leaders and trade unions. The code of conduct, which was developed with the support of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), was also signed by 10 political parties, including PAIGC and PRS. The 21-day electoral campaign was officially launched on 22 March.

9. On 20 March, a PRS delegation led by the party's president, Alberto Nambeia, informed my Special Representative in Guinea-Bissau and Head of UNIOGBIS, José Ramos-Horta, that a PRS candidate to the parliament, Mário Fambé, had been abducted by armed men that day and was being detained in the armed forces headquarters in Amura, Bissau. Following démarches by the PRS leadership, the Transitional Prime Minister, Rui Duarte de Barros, and key international partners in Bissau, Mr. Fambé was eventually released on 21 March. He was subsequently hospitalized for injuries reportedly sustained from beatings while in detention. The PRS presidential candidate, Mr. Incada, condemned the intimidation of PRS leaders in a press conference on 20 March. He also denied rumours that he had withdrawn

from the presidential race and that he was in talks with the independent candidate Mr. Nabiam.

10. On 21 March, my Special Representative convened a meeting of the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union to discuss the prospective post-election environment, as well as the detention of Mr. Fambé. On 22 March, my Special Representative, along with the special representatives of the African Union, CPLP and ECOWAS, met with the Transitional President to convey the concerns of international partners regarding acts of political intimidation in the country.

11. On 25 March, the Transitional President convened a meeting of the Supreme Council for National Defence, at which discussions were held on, inter alia, the abduction and detention of Mr. Fambé. The Transitional President subsequently told the media that the military had informed him that it considered Mr. Fambé to be a deserter and that it had arrested him to prevent him, as a serving military officer, from running in the elections. The Transitional President stated that, in his view, there could be no justification for the violence that had been inflicted on Mr. Fambé. He added that the military had reaffirmed its commitment to zero tolerance for any disruption of the elections and to ensuring security during the electoral process.

12. On 4 April, former President Koumba Yalá died of a heart attack at his home in Bissau. Mr. Yalá had been actively campaigning on behalf of independent presidential candidate Mr. Nabiam. On the same day, the Transitional Government issued a decree announcing that there would be a three-day period of national mourning, accompanied by a suspension of electoral campaigning. The Transitional President also announced, on 4 April, that Mr. Yalá would be granted a State funeral after the elections. At a press conference held on the same day, my Special Representative called for calm in the country, requested that Mr. Yalá's death not be politicized and urged Mr. Yalá's supporters to show respect for the former leader's legacy by maintaining peace during the electoral process.

13. On 13 April, the elections were held as scheduled. The international election observer missions, which included the African Union (led by former President of Mozambique Joaquim Chissano), ECOWAS (led by former interim President of Liberia Amos Sawyer), the International Organization of la Francophonie (led by former President of Cabo Verde António Mascarenhas Monteiro), CPLP (led by former Minister of Foreign Affairs Leonardo Simão of Mozambique), the European Union (led by member of the European Parliament Krzysztof Lisek) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (led by member of the parliament of Côte d'Ivoire Lassana Dosso) unanimously assessed the elections to have been peaceful, free, fair and transparent despite minor technical problems.

14. On 16 April, the President of the National Electoral Commission announced the provisional results of the elections. The PAIGC presidential candidate, Mr. Vaz, had obtained 40.98 per cent of the votes and the independent candidate, Mr. Nabiam, had obtained 25.14 per cent of the votes. In accordance with the electoral laws, since no candidate obtained at least 50 per cent plus one vote, the two candidates with the highest number of votes, in other words Mr. Vaz and Mr. Nabiam, will compete in a presidential run-off election. On 18 April, the Commission announced that PAIGC had won the two seats allocated to the diaspora in the legislative election, bringing the party's total number of seats to 57 (of a total

of 102 seats). PRS had 41 seats, the Democratic Convergence Party (PCD) had 2 seats and the New Democracy Party (PND) and the Union for Change Party had one seat each.

15. While the PAIGC and the PRS leadership expressed their acceptance of the results, the leaders of PCD and PND announced that they would not accept the results of the legislative election, arguing that their parties had won more seats than those indicated by the National Electoral Commission. On 18 April, PND lodged a complaint with the Commission regarding the election results. On 22 April, the PCD leader told the press that, in the interest of peace, his party would not pursue its complaint.

16. On 23 April, the National Electoral Commission announced the final results of the elections, confirming the leading position of PAIGC in the legislative election and the results of the two front-runners in the presidential election. The Commission also announced a record voter turnout of 89.29 per cent. Since no candidates or political parties had submitted an appeal within 48 hours of the announcement of the provisional results, the Supreme Court of Justice did not have to intervene in the process. As a result, the Commission announced that the second round of the presidential election would take place on 18 May.

2. Overview of the human rights situation in the country

17. No significant progress was made in the areas of human rights protection and the fight against impunity. On the contrary, there were new cases of politically motivated violence and intimidation against election candidates, as well as of interference in the administration of justice.

18. On 17 March, four of the eight men detained by the Judiciary Police in connection with the murder of a Mauritanian shopkeeper in Bissau on 29 January were formally indicted by the Office of the Prosecutor General. Five of the suspects, who had initially been detained at the armed forces headquarters, lodged a criminal complaint with the Judiciary Police for injuries sustained while in military detention.

19. On 17 March, the Regional Court of Bissau postponed, for the fourth time, the trial of 12 suspects accused of the murder of a Nigerian national on 8 October 2013. While the accused had been detained since 12 December 2013, neither their preventive nor pretrial detention were in accordance with national law.

20. On 19 March, a lawyer representing former employees of the port authority of Guinea-Bissau who had been accused of diverting public funds allegedly offered the investigating prosecutor a bribe of approximately $20,000 and later another of $100,000 to file away the investigation. The lawyer was detained by the Judiciary Police but released on 20 March without charge. On 21 March, the investigating prosecutor reported that his life had been threatened and requested protection and support to leave the country. He left the country on 24 March but returned a few days later.

21. During the reporting period, the suspect arrested on 18 November 2013 for the severe beating of the Minister of Transportation and Communications of the Transitional Government was released. Eight other suspects who had been interrogated between 12 and 15 November 2013 were never arrested.

22. On 3 April, candidates and parties participating in the general elections signed a manifesto on the adoption of a new agenda for the rights of the child in Guinea-Bissau immediately following the elections. The manifesto was promoted through a national awareness-raising campaign that was launched in December 2013 with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (see www.republicadimininushoje.org/). The campaign brings together more than 350 children and youth organizations representing all regions of Guinea-Bissau, including the National Children's Parliament, the National Youth Council, the Network of Children and Young Journalists and the Confederation of Associations of Students of Guinea-Bissau. The manifesto, which was endorsed in December 2013 by various eminent persons and more than 100 alliances of national and regional organizations, states that the fulfilment of the rights of the child cannot be postponed.

3. Regional and international efforts towards the restoration of and respect for constitutional order

23. On 28 and 29 March, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government held its forty-fourth ordinary session in Yamoussoukro. During the meeting, which was attended by the Transitional President and UNIOGBIS, the Authority decided to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) until 31 December 2014 and to extend the transition period until the inauguration of the legitimate authorities. In a communiqué issued at the end of the meeting, the Authority cautioned members of the defence and security forces, as well as politicians, against carrying out any acts that may disrupt the smooth conduct of the electoral process. In addition, it encouraged the political parties, the candidates and their supporters to resort exclusively to peaceful and legal means in seeking to redress any grievances. Finally, it urged the African Union and the rest of the international community to expedite the lifting of sanctions imposed on Guinea-Bissau and to unite with ECOWAS in facilitating the adoption and implementation of a consensual post-electoral programme aimed at reforming State institutions.

24. During the period under review, my Special Representative focused his good offices mainly on promoting regional and international cooperation to create a political and security environment conducive to the general elections. In this regard, he engaged in successive consultative meetings and participated in other forums with regional and international partners, both in Bissau and abroad.

25. My Special Representative also continued to liaise with international stakeholders, including the Peacebuilding Commission, to ensure that the international community sustains its engagement in Guinea-Bissau beyond the elections. In his discussions with international partners, he shared information on the work of the National Commission for Planning and Strategic Coordination (NCPSC), which was created in July 2013 to define the priorities for the remainder of the transition and its immediate aftermath. Moreover, my Special Representative continued to facilitate the development of a governance efficacy amelioration programme aimed at promoting the rebuilding of State institutions in consultation with ECOWAS, NCPSC, the United Nations country team and other international partners. With the support of the United Nations in Guinea-Bissau, NCPSC is also preparing for a post-election donor pledging conference that will be convened as soon as possible following the elections.

26. On 1 April, the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission issued a press statement emphasizing that elections were only the first step towards the restoration of constitutional order in the country, and that the polls would need to be followed by essential reforms to ensure lasting stability and democratic consolidation. The configuration expressed concern about recent episodes of political violence and condemned any attempt to use fear and intimidation as political tools. The configuration further reaffirmed its readiness to serve as a coordinating platform to help devise medium and long-term resource mobilization strategies in support of nationally led initiatives that advance key peacebuilding objectives. Moreover, the configuration took note of my Special Representative's proposal for a governance efficacy amelioration programme and acknowledged the important, leading role being played by ECOWAS in support of the modernization of the defence and security sectors in Guinea-Bissau.

27. As the Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility of the Peacebuilding Fund remains suspended, the Fund has provided approximately $5 million under the Immediate Response Facility for projects to help create an environment conducive to the conduct of elections. That financial contribution has enabled the United Nations to support the work of NCPSC, promote labour-intensive employment for women and youth, support the National Electoral Commission, strengthen electoral security, enhance the watchdog role of the national media and promote women's participation in the elections as candidates, voters and monitors.

28. On 10 April, the President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, visited Bissau in his capacity as the Chair of ECOWAS and as part of efforts by subregional organizations to assist in defusing political tensions and promoting peaceful and credible elections in Guinea-Bissau. During his visit, he met with the transitional authorities, the armed forces leadership and international partners and told the media that the military leadership had given him total guarantees that they would not interfere in the electoral process.

4. Efforts towards a democratic electoral process

29. Following the conclusion of the voter registration process on 10 February, the government technical electoral support office printed and displayed the provisional voters' list from 18 February to 4 March, in accordance with the legal requirements related to the exhibition of and challenges to the list. On 18 March, the support office handed over to the National Electoral Commission the final voters' list containing 775,508 voters, of whom 402,966 were women and 22,312 were members of the diaspora. The list consisted of 95.6 per cent of the estimated voter population.

30. While the voter registration and nomination processes for presidential and legislative candidates were being conducted, the National Electoral Commission continued its efforts to make logistical preparations for the polls. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided technical and financial support to the Commission through the multi-donor basket fund in support of elections. Arrangements for the printing and dissemination of ballot papers and miscellaneous election documents were completed on 31 March, allowing for their delivery to Bissau on 3 April. Following the completion of a mapping exercise of polling stations throughout the country, prepared with the support of the regional electoral commissions, the National Electoral Commission finalized the electoral map of

polling stations. The map provided for 3,018 polling stations in the country and 54 polling stations in the diaspora.

31. On 15 March, the National Electoral Commission launched a civic education campaign in all regions of the country with the support of UNDP. The campaign focused on emphasizing the reasons to vote given that most national actors involved in election preparations were of the view that voters already knew how to vote. The campaign included door-to-door activities and the broadcasting of programmes on community, private and public radio stations and on national television. In March, the Commission led the training of trainers of polling station officers, regional trainers and polling station officers, with the support of UNDP.

32. UNIOGBIS too provided continuous support to national stakeholders. On 21 March, at the beginning of the electoral campaign, my Special Representative had a message calling for peaceful elections broadcast regularly on four national radio stations until 11 April. He also had a video message broadcast on national and international television and by news agencies at the end of the electoral campaign period. UNIOGBIS produced seven radio programmes, including on voter registration, the electoral code of conduct, electoral security, women in politics, environmental protection, the role of the international community and the United Nations.

33. On 2 and 3 April, UNIOGBIS held a two-day training workshop for election agents, organized in partnership with the National Electoral Commission and the Faculty of Law of the University of Bissau. A total of 35 participants representing 12 political parties and 9 candidates attended the workshop.

34. UNIOGBIS and ECOMIB provided technical support to the joint command of the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Defence of the Transitional Government, which was established to monitor the implementation of the national electoral security plan for 2014. At the request of the Transitional Government, UNIOGBIS conducted training courses on the electoral security process for 1,672 police and military personnel. One police officer and one military adviser from UNIOGBIS were co-located with the joint command to assist with the planning, monitoring and coordination of election security arrangements in Bissau and in the country's regions, in close cooperation with the African Union and ECOMIB.

35. The international partners of Guinea-Bissau deployed eight election observer missions to the country, comprised of 542 international election observers, including 32 long-term observers. The missions were from the African Union (56), CPLP (57), ECOWAS (273), the European Union (59), the European Parliament (13), the International Organization of la Francophonie (16), the non-governmental organization Ideal (4), the joint Timor-Leste and New Zealand mission (26), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (10), the United States of America (16) and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (12). Although there is no statutory provision for domestic election observation, national civil society organizations deployed some 880 monitors nationwide to observe the process from outside the polling stations.

B. Security situation

36. During the reporting period, the security situation remained relatively stable. At the end of the meeting of ECOWAS chiefs of defence staff held in Bissau on 19 February, the Guinea-Bissau Chief of General Staff of the armed forces, General António Indjai, promised zero tolerance for fraud in the general elections. The media also quoted him as saying that the elections would be transparent and security would be total.

37. Notwithstanding the commitment by the armed forces' leadership to ensuring security during the electoral process, concerns remained about the security of presidential and legislative candidates. On 6 March, Faustino Imbali — a former Prime Minister, leader of the Party of the People's Manifest and an aspiring presidential candidate — informed UNIOGBIS that, on 5 March, five uniformed military personnel had confiscated a vehicle allegedly given to him by General Indjai. Mr. Imbali explained that the five individuals had justified their action by stating that he had not complied with a request from General Indjai that he withdraw from the presidential race in order to favour Mr. Nabiam.

38. According to the approved national electoral security plan, the military were on call and had a reserve capacity role for contingency situations. Although the police and the National Guard were expected to provide security to all candidates, some of the candidates who had expressed concern about harassment by the military requested and received protection from ECOMIB.

III. Socioeconomic and humanitarian situation

39. The socioeconomic situation in Guinea-Bissau continued to be very challenging during the period under review, especially as the country did not receive any budgetary assistance in the first quarter of 2014.

40. On 13 February, a delegation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completed a three-day mission to Bissau. In a communiqué issued at the end of the mission, the IMF delegation noted that the economy had not recovered from the economic and political consequences of the coup d'état of April 2012, and estimated that the economy would grow at a rate of only 0.3 per cent in 2013. The IMF delegation also noted that low levels of revenue-gathering and of international financial assistance had led to a build-up in salary arrears owed to civil servants, accounting for 1.2 per cent of the gross domestic product.

41. A high-level delegation of the Group of Seven Plus fragile States, visited Guinea-Bissau from 5 to 15 March to conduct a preliminary assessment on the implementation of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States. The delegation, which was led by the president of the Group, the Minister of Finance of Timor-Leste, Emilia Pires, met with the Council of Ministers of the Transitional Government, parliamentarians and representatives of the private sector and civil society organizations. The delegation worked in close partnership with NCPSC and the Ministry of the Economy. On 10 March, Mrs. Pires briefed the international partners of Guinea-Bissau in Bissau on the mission and outlined proposals for a fragility assessment to be conducted after the elections, with a view to assisting the national authorities in determining national priorities to be presented at a donor pledging conference.

42. Although a social pact for the education sector was signed by the Transitional Government and teachers' unions in December 2013, strikes continued owing to the fact that an agreed operation to confirm and produce a single list of teaching staff had not been completed. The single list was intended to facilitate the disbursement of payments to teachers from World Bank funds. The health union announced a 5-day strike and the teachers' union announced a 30-day strike, to be held starting on 1 April.

43. The number of reported cases involving the issuance of illegal fishing licences and of illegal logging, deforestation, land expropriation and the excessive exploitation of natural resources increased during the reporting period. In an interview with the news agency *Lusa* on 25 March, the Director of the International Union for Conservation of Nature in Bissau warned that the exploitation of heavy sands and logging in the country had reached alarming proportions. On 29 March, the Director of Tiniguena, a national environmental non-governmental organization, stated on a radio programme in Bissau that the logging activities contravened the forestry law of 2011, while also noting that logging revenues in Guinea-Bissau were drastically low compared to those on the international market. He added that civil society organizations planned to lodge a complaint in court to stop logging exports and to call on the elected authorities to impose a moratorium on logging.

44. In the light of concerns over the possible spread of the Ebola virus in West Africa, the Transitional Government developed a contingency plan aimed at preventing and controlling an outbreak of the virus, with the support of the World Health Organization, UNICEF and other development partners. The plan includes measures to strengthen the overall epidemic surveillance system, reactivate epidemic management committees at all levels, establish and equip sites to isolate suspected cases at all levels, including at border points, and disseminate information and key messages to the population. No suspected cases of Ebola virus infection were reported in Guinea-Bissau during the period under review.

IV. Observations

45. The high voter turnout (almost 90 per cent) in the first round of the presidential and legislative elections was a historic achievement, clearly demonstrating the determination of the people of Guinea-Bissau to restore constitutional order in their country through democratic means. I commend all of them, including the transitional authorities, the election management bodies, political parties, the defence and security forces, civil society organizations, religious leaders and women's groups, as well as youth, for their remarkable commitment to completing the transition process.

46. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the international partners of Guinea-Bissau, in particular the African Union, ECOWAS, the European Union, CPLP and the Governments of Nigeria and Timor-Leste, for their invaluable efforts throughout the electoral process. Their financial and security assistance, as well as their steadfast political and moral support to the people of Guinea-Bissau, significantly contributed to ensuring that the situation in the country did not deteriorate into an intractable crisis.

47. In the same spirit that prevailed during the first round of the presidential election, I urge the people of Guinea-Bissau to go out in large numbers to cast their

votes for their preferred candidate during the second round, scheduled to be held on 18 May. I also encourage them to continue to exercise the restraint and calm that they have demonstrated so far in the electoral process.

48. Following the completion of the electoral process, it will be critical for the newly elected Government to deliver tangible dividends that will be immediately reflected in the lives of all the citizens of Guinea-Bissau. In order to achieve this and, in particular, to ensure the functioning of State institutions, the provision of public services and the prevention of a further deterioration in the prevailing difficult socioeconomic situation, the new Government will require urgent budgetary support. The Government will have to agree on immediate and medium-term goals for the country's stability and prepare for a donor pledging conference in close cooperation with development partners. For its part, the international community must make every effort to address the urgent needs of the citizens of Guinea-Bissau by pledging and delivering on promises to provide the country with financial support in the identified priority areas.

49. In the medium to long term, it will be critical for the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to manage efficiently the resources derived from tax revenues and international assistance to ensure the sustainable functioning of State institutions, the regular payment of salaries to civil servants and the timely delivery of basic services to the population. In this regard, I welcome the ongoing dialogue among national and international partners on the governance efficacy amelioration programme, which is aimed at promoting the rebuilding of State institutions in Guinea-Bissau. I encourage all stakeholders to support the finalization and implementation of the programme. I also call upon the Security Council and the international community as a whole to lend support to the envisaged donor pledging conference to secure the necessary funds for its implementation.

50. The elected authorities will need to promote inclusive dialogue and transparency to ensure that the new Government is based on merit, competency and gender equality. They will also need to strengthen the institutions in the defence, security and justice sectors to enable them to fulfil their constitutionally defined roles and maintain constitutional order.

51. The promotion and protection of human rights in Guinea-Bissau remains a key priority to achieve long-term stability in the country and boost socioeconomic development. It will therefore be critical for the new Government to commit to protecting the human rights and freedoms of all the people of Guinea-Bissau, to end the culture of impunity by ensuring the conduct of independent, impartial and transparent investigations into gross human rights violations and to implement the United Nations human rights due diligence policy.

52. During the past two years, destruction of the country's forests and natural reserves has reached unprecedented levels, with negative consequences for the environment and the livelihood of the population. The maritime resources of Guinea-Bissau have been under threat for years as the State has been unable to protect its own waters and fight corruption. The reported issuing of illegal fishing licences in total disregard of sustainable fisheries, if confirmed, must be stopped. The income generated from the exploitation of natural resources should be for the benefit of the entire population and future generations, not just for a few individuals. The new authorities will have to work closely with relevant Member States, civil society organizations, private companies and investors to make

transparency in natural resources management a key national priority. I urge international partners to assist the country in establishing best transparency practices in this area.

53. A return to full constitutional order will provide the people of Guinea-Bissau with an opportunity to turn a new page in their country's history. I call upon them to take advantage of this new start and to stand guard against any potential reversal of the democratic gains already made by, inter alia, promoting and practising accountable governance, establishing harmonious civil-military relations and ensuring the protection and realization of fundamental human rights without discrimination.

54. In conclusion, I wish to express my appreciation to the staff of UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team, under the leadership of my Special Representative, as well as to the regional and international partners of Guinea-Bissau for their contributions to the efforts to restore constitutional order and promote peacebuilding in the country.